IERI

INTERNATIONAL ETHICS AND REGULATORY INSTITUTE

July 2025 curated by Eric R. Hartsbridge

The Embarrassing Failure of TAQA Morocco's Leadership

Delays, numerous warning signs ignored, and finally the "tourist" trick: this is how TAQA Morocco treats a top-level manager. The investigative dossier documents how L.Prola, an Italian executive with years of international experience, was exposed to illegal practices from day one. The Emirati multinational—a group that self-celebrates as a "benchmark of excellence"—asked the executive to enter Morocco on a tourist visa and begin working without any legal authorization.

The result was immediate: essentially a form of blackmail, attached to the employment contract and confirmed by a formal letter in which TAQA Morocco's management stated that if L.Prola did not appear on-site—despite lacking a legal visa—within a few days, the company " would consider the contractual conditions unmet" and cancel the hire. This was an act of arrogant and disrespectful authority, bordering on the grotesque, condemning the manager for his "absence" instead of shaming the company for its illegal behavior.

In this surreal context, L.Prola emerges as a beacon of professionalism and integrity. He refuses to violate immigration laws and reports the situation to the top levels of the group. As any high-level leader should, he immediately perceives the severity of the pressure from the nervous and aggressive behavior of the management. Rather than give in, he promptly activates internal whistleblowing channels and personally informs the CEO and Board of Directors of TAQA Group of the legal and reputational risks at stake. The result? Deafening silence: to this day, there has been no response to his urgent communications.

Ignoring Whistleblowers Is a Strategic Mistake

As the Harvard Business Review reminds us: "Looking at these examples, it would be easy to say that whistleblowers have little impact on how companies both conduct themselves and weather corporate storms. But that's not the case."

In other words, employees who report irregularities are not enemies to be silenced, but vital warning signals that protect the health of the company. A recent analysis confirms this:

"Our analysis revealed that whistleblowers (and large numbers of them) are crucial to keeping firms healthy and that functioning internal hotlines are of paramount importance to business goals including profitability." (Harvard Business Review)

The TAQA group should take this warning seriously: instead of dismissing reports as nuisances, the company could have addressed the problem early—before it escalated.

Evidence of Leadership Incompetence

Illegal pressure: It emerged that TAQA Morocco literally tried to have L.Prola enter the country to work without any prior government authorization, a clear violation of local labor law. The company deliberately bypassed visa and ministerial contract procedures, placing all legal and personal risks on the manager.

Formal intimidation: Local management issued peremptory ultimatums, warning that physical absence would render "the contract no longer valid." A simply unfair and dishonorable pressure tactic.

Hostility toward transparency: To the manager's legitimate requests (visa-stamped contract, ministerial receipts, official permits), the company responded evasively and dismissively. In practice, TAQA tried to deceive L.Prola with empty promises like "everyone does this at the start" rather than clarify the legal procedures.

Silence from the top: Despite the whistleblowing report and formal notification to the CEO and Board of TAQA Group, there has been no official response. The top management preferred to look the other way rather than investigate the matter.

Key Points of Leadership Failure

The leaders demonstrated slowness, complicity, and ultimately a shameful complacency. Instead of encouraging dialogue, they displayed the rare "talent" of making amateurism look like company policy: "*There's a certain boldness in presenting oneself as a model of excellence while operating well below the threshold of mediocrity. A rare talent indeed: that of making incompetence look like a strategy*."

This statement is not a compliment—it is a scathing critique of those who claim to be leaders without truly deserving the title.

The Harvard Business Review also warns that statements of intent "are not enough to ensure ethical behavior." Even policy drafters themselves admit this: "*Employees are charged with conducting their business affairs in accordance with the highest ethical standards… Moral as well as legal obligations will be fulfilled in a manner which will reflect pride on the Company's name*." states the policy of many prestigious groups.

Yet, as a recent HBR article notes: "*Clearly it takes more than a compliance policy or values statement to sustain a truly ethical workplace*."

In other words, corporate declarations on paper are worthless if in practice the company exploits every legal loophole at an employee's expense.

By contrast, TAQA Morocco's conduct represents a textbook example of failed leadership on multiple fronts: an inability to manage legal risk, to protect employees, and even to safeguard the group's own reputation. L.Prola, a man of integrity, could not simply stand by in silence. Rather than submit to a despicable dynamic, he carefully documented every step and filed the evidence with competent authorities and ministries—preventing those who broke trust from rewriting the narrative. In doing so, he protected not only himself but also TAQA from future whitewashed revisions.

In conclusion, the TAQA case is a serious warning to the world of international business: the courage of an executive like L.Prola has pulled back the curtain on the embarrassing amateurism of a leadership that claimed to be "excellent." The lesson is clear: without transparency and without listening to internal whistleblowers, even the strongest group can quickly become a giant with feet of clay.

But by lifting that curtain, stakeholders are now on alert: no authority will be able to pretend not to see such serious omissions. A regime of sound governance should have acted on the principle that: "*Whistleblowers… are crucial to keeping firms healthy*." and corrected course before reaching scandal. TAQA, instead, has demonstrated that without real leadership and accountability, the worst is always just around the corner.

Sources

Internal dossier on the "TAQA–L.P. Case"
Ministry of Labour – Corporate Ethics Department
Harvard Business Review (quoted articles)

Contact

e.r. hartsbridge@proton.me
ieri.org